

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0907

April 22, 2010

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State
United States Department of State
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton:

This letter is to call your attention to the ongoing violence by pro-Sandinista mobs against opposition legislators in Nicaragua. I urge you to clearly condemn these attacks on Nicaraguan constitutional institutions and to take immediate measures to pressure the Nicaraguan Government to meet its commitments under the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

For the last two days, violent pro-Sandinista mobs have blocked opposition legislators from meeting in Nicaragua's National Assembly. The legislators are seeking to overturn a decree by President Ortega that would undermine Nicaragua's constitutional institutions with the ultimate aim of perpetuating Ortega's reign in power. The pro-Ortega mobs have used mortar attacks and there are reports of at least three injured opposition legislators. I am particularly concerned about the safety of more than a dozen legislators - including former Presidential candidate Eduardo Montealegre - which the pro-Ortega mobs have kept as virtual hostages at their party's headquarters.

President Ortega remains conspicuously silent in the face of his supporters' reprehensible behavior; and we have yet to see a public condemnation from the United States Government.

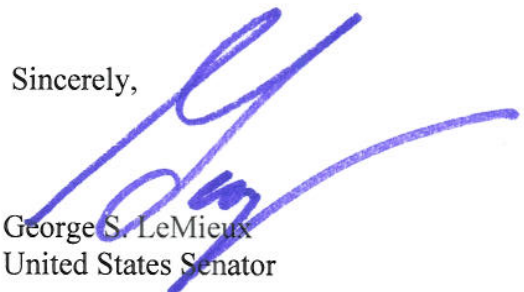
We have been here before. In Honduras, the inability of the United States and the Organization of American States (OAS) to send a clear message to President Zelaya about the sanctity of democratic institutions and constitutional processes ultimately contributed to the fall of his government. We must not repeat that mistake in Nicaragua.

I urge the Administration to promptly and strongly condemn President Ortega's relentless weakening of Nicaraguan institutions and the ongoing violence against opposition legislators. I was pleased that OAS Secretary General Insulza expressed deep concern about the ongoing violence in Nicaragua, and I hope that the U.S. Representative to the OAS, Ambassador Carmen Lomellin, promptly calls on its Permanent Council to assess the situation in Nicaragua in accordance to the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

Additionally, I would like to know the Administration's strategy to safeguard democratic rule and respect for the Inter-American Democratic Charter in Nicaragua; and any steps taken by the State Department and Ambassador Robert Callahan to implement said strategy.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,



George S. LeMieux
United States Senator